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Sandra and Cecil Parker of Jani-King Honored at Grace Hill Women's Business Center Wall of Fame Ceremony

ST. LOUIS - Sandra Parker and her husband, Cecil, are partners in a janitorial franchise. Franchisees of Jani-King, the couple currently have contracts with four businesses and are working on a new one. Their services consist of cleaning business establishments. The work can be seven days a week, some nights and some days.

"After we schedule a 'walk through' of a new business to see what they want done, we give them a bid on that basis," Parker said. "Right now, there are just the two of us in the business and it keeps us very busy."

Parker had always wanted to be in business for herself. She was born in St. Louis and attended the public schools. She completed a year of college classes at St. Louis Community College at Forest Park, but didn't really know what she wanted to do with her education. About 10 years ago, the couple was ready to start up a laundromat business. They had gotten the property through the Land Redevelopment Authority. They planned to add apartments atop the laundromat. They had their financing and were ready to start the renovation and building process when she became ill. As a result they had to let that entrepreneurial opportunity lapse, but the urge to become entrepreneurs continued.

"One day I was looking in the paper and I saw what Grace Hill was offering to people who wanted their own business," said Parker, "I got into the program. I took classes every Saturday over on South Hampton Avenue about how to start your own business. The course prepared me to start a business. It covered subjects like preparing a business plan, bookkeeping, taxes, and profit and loss statements. Through the WBC, we are currently in the process of applying for a loan with local banks and the U.S. Small business Administration. We met with a banker last week."

Sandra Parker and her husband have been married for 28 years, a second marriage for each that brought children from pervious marriages together. They raised all of their children--two of hers, one of his and one together-- and they are now grandparents and delighted to be independent entrepreneurs at last.

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